

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13

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P R 201025Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 380

INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, BG, IN

SUBJECT: MAULANA BHASHANI CALLS FOR MARCH ON FARAKKA

REF: DACCA 1863

1. AT A "PRAYER MEETING" HELD AT THE ISLAMIC FOUNDATION AUDITORIUM ON SUNDAY (APRIL 18), MAULANA ABDUL HAMID KHAN BHASHANI, NONAGENARIAN, OLD TIME PEASANT LEADER, PUTATIVE LEFTIST AND LONGTIME MISCHIEF-MAKER, ANNOUNCED HIS INTENTION TO LEAD A "PEACEFUL, SILENT AND NON-VIOLENT" PROCESSION FROM RAJSHAHI "TOWARD" FARAKKA BARRAGE ON MAY 16. IN HIS ADDRESS, MAULANA BHASHANI REHEARSED NOW-FAMILIAR CHARGES REGARDING INDIA'S INQUITOUS BEHAVIOR AND THEN WENT ON TO REMIND HIS LISTENERS OF THE VARIOUS MOVEMENTS WHICH HAD FORCED THE FALL OF THE BRITISH RULE IN INDIA. HITTING A HIGH NOTE, THE MAULANA REPORTEDLY SAID THAT A "PEOPLE WHO HAD WON THEIR INDEPENDENCE AT THE COST OF 30 LAKH LIVES WOULD NOT HESITATE TO SACRIFICE ANOTHER 150 TO 200 LAKH LIVES FOR DEFENDING THEIR INDEPENDENCE..."

2. COMMENT: IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT THE MAULANA WILL,
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EITHER LITERALLY OR FIGURATIVELY, LEAD A MARCH AGAINST

FARAKKA. RATHER, THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HIS SPEECH APPEARS TO LIE IN THE WILLINGNESS OF THE MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATION TO LET HIM USE HIS POWER TO AROUSE JUST AT A TIME WHEN THERE SEEMED TO BE SOME HOPE THAT MOVEMENT BY INDIA AND BANGLADESH TOWARD A MEASURE OF ACCOMMODATION LAY AHEAD. HOWEVER, WE UNDERSTAND FROM A CRYPTIC CONVERSATION WITH MFA'S DIRECTOR-GENERAL FOR THE SUBCONTINENT, ABDUL BARI, THAT THE PRELIMINARY ISSUES--(I) WHAT KIND OF MEETING IS TO BE HELD FIRST (SEE REFTEL), AND (II) WHAT PERIOD OF THE YEAR IS TO BE CONSIDERED (E.G., SEE DACCA 1391 AND NEW DELHI 4779) -- ARE STILL UNRESOLVED. IF AGREEMENT STILL SEEMS DISTANT, THE MLA MAY SIMPLY HAVE WANTED TO USE MAULANA TO MAKE SOME FURTHER POINT TO THE INDIANS.
BOSTER

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